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Militarizing the Interagency

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract

In order to achieve national strategy, all elements of national power must be used in concert with one another. Our Nation accomplishes this through the Interagency Process (IAP), which is rife with problems that inhibit effective coordination and execution of the national strategy.

The problems within the IAP bear much similarity to those experienced by the U.S. military prior to the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1987 (Goldwater-Nichols). Goldwater-Nichols enforced the “jointness” that the individual services were reluctant to support and profoundly enhanced the warfighting capability of the Armed Forces. The apparent success of Goldwater-Nichols is worthy of study in solving the interagency problems. The major problems inherent in the IAP are analogous to those present in the military prior to the Goldwater-Nichols Act, and should be addressed in the same way—through legislation.

Legislation should include measures to create a common interagency culture, doctrine, regional focus, and directive authority at both the national and regional levels. These measures must be broad and far-reaching in order to ensure that our Nation can apply a concerted effort of all elements of power in pursuit of our national strategy.

Militarizing the Interagency

“I believe that military force does not solve every problem, nor is it our only form of power. There are other kinds of pressure and other kinds of support. In order to achieve our national goals we have to combine every capability in our national bag in the most artful mix possible.”¹

-Anthony Zinni

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, our nation has been slow to recognize that the international environment has dramatically changed. While failing states and regional instability, non-state actors, and international terrorism have come to define the emergent threats to our nation, our government has remained rooted in national security apparatuses and strategic planning procedures that were developed to fight the Cold War.² Global confrontation of superpowers no longer dominates the context of every international conflict or problem, and the military element of national power, solely applied, is frequently the least suited to address the complex contingencies that are prevalent in today’s world.³ The diplomatic, informational, or economic elements of power have assumed an even greater importance—and indeed primacy in many situations—in attaining our national objectives. There are few situations, however, in which only one element is required at the exclusion of the others, and herein is where the problem lies. The “artful mix” General Zinni refers to in the above quote is essential to effectively engage the complex problems which face us today, but it has proved elusive to attain.

The reason for this is the failings of the Interagency Process (IAP), the ill-defined system through which the nation attempts to coordinate and integrate the operations of all U.S. Government (USG) agencies to pursue our nation’s strategy or respond to crises.⁴ To see its ineffectiveness in doing this, one needs to look no farther than the daily news.

Reports of incongruent policy, competing agency agendas, and inadequate planning—particularly in regard to current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan—have grabbed numerous headlines since major combat operations ended. Parochialism, in-fighting, lack of oversight, and ill-conceived policy based on consensus settlement are some of the enduring characteristics of the IAP, and have remained constant from one administration to the next. The IAP’s lack of accountability and oversight, as well as the bureaucratic inertia of USG agencies, have sustained these problems; for no one can be held accountable if no one is in charge, and it is much easier to conduct business as usual rather than struggle with reform.⁵

The conditions that define the IAP seem to bear much resemblance to the inter-service conflicts within the Department of Defense (DOD) prior to the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act. Goldwater-Nichols enforced the “jointness” that the individual services were reluctant to support and profoundly enhanced the warfighting capability of the Armed Forces.⁶ The apparent success of Goldwater-Nichols is worthy of study in solving the interagency problems. It is my thesis that the major problems inherent in the IAP are analogous to those present in the military prior to the Goldwater-Nichols Act, and should be addressed in the same way. Legislation in the vein of Goldwater-Nichols applied to USG agencies and the IAP would help ensure interagency cooperation and success in planning and executing national strategy. This is of prime importance to the operational commander. Not only is he a part of the IAP, but he also has to execute the often disjointed policies that flow from it.

I intend to demonstrate my thesis by identifying the major problems within the IAP that prevent coordinated national efforts, and compare them to those experienced by the military prior to Goldwater-Nichols. I will then propose specific measures that would correct

the deficiencies within the IAP to create a truly “joint” interagency. The roles of non-government, private volunteer, and international/multinational organizations are beyond the scope of this paper. While it is recognized that they are all players in the IAP and therefore part of the problems, I believe we need to “get our own house in order” first and address those organizations that are strictly under government purview.

What’s wrong with the Interagency?

“The Washington bureaucracy was too disjointed to make the vision of all the strategies, from the President’s to the CINC’s, a reality. There was no single authority in the bureaucracy to coordinate the significant programs we CINCs designed. The uncoordinated funding, policy decisions, authority, assigned geography, and many other issues separated State, Defense, Congress, the National Security Council, and other government agencies and made it difficult to pull complex engagement plans together.”⁷

-Anthony Zinni

In order to understand the problems within the IAP, one must first understand that USG agencies are living institutions. “Institutions, while composed of many, ever-changing individuals, have distinct and enduring personalities of their own that govern much of their behavior.”⁸ Each agency has its own internal culture, defined by its purpose, its history, and its leadership among other things. Each culture has its own distinct attributes, style, values, and bias. The members within the agency are drawn to its particular culture, or assume it—to greater or lesser degrees—through association. These individuals then seek to advance their agency’s interests above all others, as those interests become a reflection of their own identity and world view. This in turn perpetuates and further entrenches the culture within the individual agency. With the varied functions and large number of agencies within the USG, it should be no surprise that there are frequent clashes of cultural differences when

interagency cooperation is required. Each agency invariably wants to advance its own programs and line of thought, and is resistant to subordinating its agenda to that of another agency.⁹ Though competition within the IAP is not a bad thing in and of itself, problems arise when agency agendas are advanced at the expense of the best interests of the nation.

Members of the Armed Forces are well aware of institutional cultural differences and the adverse effects that can occur when institutional interests clash. Inter-service rivalry, parochialism, and “service-interests-above-all-else” mentalities were the dominant themes in inter-service cooperation prior to Goldwater-Nichols. The individual services viewed protecting their influence and independence as a greater need than developing joint capabilities to wage modern warfare.¹⁰ Service needs and prerogatives always trumped joint ones because that was what service cultures instilled and demanded. The reforms of Goldwater-Nichols worked to overcome this by in effect creating a “joint culture,” that both exists alongside service cultures while encompassing them at the same time. The joint culture fosters a greater sense of cooperation in achieving national goals, while still maintaining service competition to a degree that remains constructive. If a common interagency culture could be established throughout the USG agencies, it could produce an IAP primarily concerned with the greater good of the nation first, rather than the promotion of individual agency agendas.¹¹

The next problem is the absence of a common interagency doctrine; the lack of which discourages the development of an interagency culture.¹² In a briefing from National Defense University’s Institute for National Strategic Studies, the “unwritten doctrine” for players in the IAP was implied as follows:

- Defend agency interests
- Appear responsive to crisis
- Avoid irrevocable decisions¹³

While these comments were lighthearted in nature, the sting of truth underlies them. Without a common doctrine, there is no common starting point for responding to each new contingency. Valuable time is lost in responding to crises as the players must come to a consensus on ground rules and determine their roles before they address the issue at hand. Any lessons learned at the end are recorded only in the memory of those participating, and promptly forgotten unless it is something that can advance their agency's standing or funding. The lack of a unifying doctrine within the IAP, in comparison to the military, was noted by the Center for Strategic & International Studies in a recent report, stating:

“Unlike the military, which has doctrine and a standard approach to planning operations, the U.S. government as a whole lacks established procedures for developing integrated strategies and plans. Each new administration tends to reinvent the wheel, issuing new guidance on how strategy development and planning is to be done, often overlooking the best practices of and lessons learned by its predecessors.... This *ad hoc* approach has thwarted institutional learning and often hindered performance.”¹⁴

The report goes on to say that “there is no ‘planning culture’ outside the Department of Defense,” and that the “notion [of planning] is largely foreign to other agencies....”¹⁵ Most civilian agencies don’t have dedicated planning staffs, and are more focused on short term political results rather than long-term strategies. Without an overarching doctrine for planning and executing interagency operations, individual agency cultures will continue to dominate the IAP and mire its results in mediocrity or failure. Again, this is not unlike inter-service conditions prior to Goldwater-Nichols.

One of the major provisions of Goldwater-Nichols was tasking the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) with developing joint doctrine for the joint operations of the armed forces. Although many would argue that joint doctrine is of little use, as it is written based on consensus of all services, it still provides a degree of unity that allows effective operations. Even if joint doctrine is less than current, it still provides a common starting point from which to work. More importantly, by forcing the services to abide by joint doctrine, it sustains and perpetuates the joint culture.

Doctrine obviously doesn't make itself, and it must constantly evolve and adapt to a changing world in order to stay relevant. The CJCS has the Joint Doctrine Division, a section of the Joint Staff dedicated to developing and reviewing joint doctrine. Although all the services rightly have input into joint doctrine, the Joint Staff is the honest broker who ensure that the doctrine meets the needs and facilitates the operations of the joint force as a whole.

As there is no permanent doctrine for the IAP, there is also no independent authority to create and revise it. The National Security Council (NSC) and associated staff would at first glance appear to be the organization to fill this role, as the National Security Act of 1947 established the NSC "to coordinate foreign policy and defense policy, and to reconcile diplomatic and military commitments and requirements."¹⁶ The legislation that created the NSC and gave it purpose, however, did not require it to develop any sort of interagency doctrine.¹⁷ Further, the legislation did not define the organization of the NSC beyond its principal members. As a result, the NSC has been an amorphous body throughout its existence, changing its structure and functioning based on the desires of the sitting President. In a paper from the Brookings Institution, the authors state that the NSC staff has steadily

grown in size over the years of its existence, and “has become less like a staff and more like an operating agency” itself.¹⁸ As a result, they continue:

“[The NSC staff] has become less flexible and less adaptable, and its procedures more rigid and bureaucratic. Moreover, with its immersion in policy detail, the predominant focus of its work has become short-term, with the immediate crowding out the important.”¹⁹

The NSC staff has essentially become a crisis action agency that serves the President alone, creating its own agendas that may be in competition with other agencies within the government, and tainting its role as the honest broker it was intended to be. With no independent organization to play this honest broker, there can be no one to create a respected overarching doctrine for the IAP to operate within.

The most visible shortfall of the IAP resulting from this lack of doctrine and organizational oversight is the actual execution of interagency operations, particularly in regard to decision-making. “Who’s in charge?” is the question most frequently asked when agencies must work together, and the answer is seldom simple, if there is one at all. With so many overlaps of “turf” in modern complex contingencies, discerning who has ultimate authority in an operation below the President is often difficult. As an illustrative example, one could look at the National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) dated May 11, 2004, that addresses USG post-conflict operations in Iraq.

“Commander, USCENTCOM, under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense, shall continue to be responsible for the U.S. efforts with respect to security and military operations in Iraq. In all activities, the Chief of Mission and Commander, USCENTCOM shall ensure the closest cooperation and mutual support.”²⁰

From this, one would gather that USCENTCOM has the final say in any matters related to security and military operations in Iraq, until one reads the second sentence implying that the Chief of Mission also has a vote “*in all activities*”, which would

presumably include military operations. Complex contingencies such as Iraq are multi-dimensional by definition, and are never confined strictly within the lines of diplomatic, military, and other elements of national power. When conflicts arise, who makes the call and ensures that different agencies are working in concert with each other? The NSPD goes on to further obfuscate lines of authority:

“The Secretary of State shall be responsible for the continuous supervision and general direction of all assistance for Iraq. Commander, USCENTCOM [U.S. Central Command], with the policy guidance of the Chief of Mission, shall direct all USG efforts and coordinate international efforts in support of organizing, equipping, and training all Iraqi security forces. At the appropriate time, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly decide when these functions shall transfer to a security assistance organization and other appropriate organization under the authority of the Secretary of State and the Chief of Mission...”²¹

Again, we see overlapping lines of authority. USCENTCOM is directing all efforts and assistance in training Iraqi forces, as long as it does not conflict with the views of the Chief of Mission, and meets the ideas of the Secretary of State—since he is responsible for “*all assistance*,” which again presumably includes military assistance. The lack of a designated directive authority to take a holistic view of interagency operations, ensure everyone is working towards a common goal, and resolve disputes with the ultimate goal in mind, has led to disjointed efforts in Iraq that effectively worsened the situation. In a New York Times article, the lack of this single authority in Iraq was highlighted in a clash of interest between USCENTCOM and the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in regard to military force levels.

“[Commander, USCENTCOM, General Tommy] Franks said he had sought to assure [CPA Administrator L. Paul] Bremer that he would have enough troops in late May. While Bremer argued that he could not get Iraq’s economy going until the American military made the country safer, Franks asserted that the slow pace of reconstruction was undermining security.

‘When I would talk to Jerry Bremer,’ Franks recalled, ‘I would say “Listen Jerry, you want to talk to me about security in terms of forces. I want to talk to you about the CPA and how many civilians—wingtips, I call them—you guys have out in these 18 provinces in order to take large sums of money, move them around in civil works projects, and get the angry young men off the streets so that fewer troops will be necessary.”’ The debate between Bremer...and the senior officers in Iraq would become a continuing refrain.”²²

The IAP aspires for a collegial harmony among the agencies involved to develop a consensus policy or decision. While it is assumed that this tactic has worked well in Utopia, it has found little success in an IAP lacking a common interagency culture and dominated by individual agency agendas and personalities. Even when national intentions are seemingly clearly stated, the lack of directive authority below the NSC allows those intentions to be “redefined by institutions, factions, and individuals divided over goals, methods, interpretation of facts, and personal ambitions.”²³

Lack of a single responsible authority was also a major problem for the military in joint operations—specifically in regard to the combatant commands—prior to Goldwater-Nichols. In 1983 hearings before the Armed Services Committee, Former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger defined the problem:

“In all of our military institutions, the time honored principle of ‘unity of command’ is inculcated. Yet at the national level it is firmly resisted and flagrantly violated. Unity of command is endorsed if and only if it applies at the service level. The inevitable consequence is both the duplication of effort and the ultimate ambiguity of command.”²⁴

Congress found the military chains of command to be “confused and cumbersome” and the combatant commands themselves to be “weak and unified in name only,” primarily due the

power and influence of the individual services and their parochial interests.²⁵ Goldwater-Nichols corrected these shortfalls by clearly defining the chain of command for the combatant commanders, and giving them the commensurate authority to command the inter-service forces assigned to them without undue service influence. The success of these measures in achieving unity of command is clearly demonstrated in the effective performance of the combatant commands in operations and peacetime activities since the Act's passage.²⁶

The lack of a single directive authority within the IAP reveals another problem however—the lack of competent personnel to lead and staff such an organization. Exposure to and knowledge of USG agencies besides one's own is essential for the IAP to function effectively, yet the personnel policies of most agencies “do not promote professionalism or reward service in interagency jobs.”²⁷ In fact, most discourage it, though not implicitly. If one strays outside of his agency, he risks the loss of credibility within it, and subsequently, the loss of greater opportunity for advancement. “While current personnel policies in the individual agencies provide for some interagency exposure, overall they foster the development of individuals with an agency-specific focus.”²⁸ Personnel must place their agency's interest above all else when involved in interagency work, because they are only there temporarily, and will one day return to the “home office.”

Professional education and training is also absent from much of the IAP. Outside of the military, there are no agencies that devote time and resources to train and educate their personnel to conduct interagency operations.²⁹ Marine Commandant General Hagee noted in a recent interview, “I don't know of any other agency in the U.S. government that has such an education continuum [as the military]. For the other agencies to be where we are, they

have to establish such an education system.”³⁰ Without a trained corps of interagency professionals, it will be difficult to establish a legitimate, respected directive authority.

The military experienced the same problems with joint personnel policies and training prior to Goldwater-Nichols. The 1985 Locher Report concluded as much, stating the following:

“For the most part, military officers do not want to be assigned to joint duty; are pressured or monitored for loyalty by their services while serving on joint assignments; are not prepared by either education or experience to perform their joint duties; and serve for only a relatively short period of time once they have learned their jobs.”³¹

In order to ensure that the “best and brightest” would be assigned to joint duty, and to ultimately perpetuate a joint culture within the military, Congress tied joint service and education to promotion. Their actions had the intended effect, as most would agree that higher-quality officers are both seeking and being assigned duty on joint staffs, and the quality of joint staff work has improved dramatically.³²

Finally, the IAP lacks a common focus on how it views the world. Each agency, with the exception of the NSC and Department of State (DOS), has a different regional structure through which it monitors world events and assigns responsibilities. These structures bear little resemblance to each other in most cases. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has divided its geographic responsibilities into three regional offices; U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has four; DOD has five; and DOS and the NSC have six.³³ These differing structures confuse lines of responsibility and authority, and complicate unity of effort in developing policy and planning and conducting operations.³⁴ For example, India and Indonesia both fall within Pacific Command’s area of responsibility. DOS, however, has India within its South Asian Affairs regional bureau, and Indonesia within its

East Asian and Pacific Affairs bureau. The CIA also has the same two countries in different regional offices as well. While there are probably good reasons within all the agencies for their particular structure—such as DOD’s rationale for dividing Pakistan and India between different combatant commands—this disparity inhibits effective interagency coordination and could lead to confusion in contingencies.³⁵

In the military’s case, Goldwater-Nichols had no measures that specifically addressed the regional focus of the military’s combatant commands. It had existed with various changes since World War II, and the National Security Act of 1947 had established the legal basis for it.³⁶ Goldwater-Nichols implicitly established that a common regional focus was important, however, by the other measures that defined the responsibilities and authority of the regional combatant commanders. As the combatant commanders would lead any warfighting efforts within their region, all the services came to view the “CinCdoms” in the same way, creating a common world view throughout the military.

In summary, the major problems of the IAP are quite similar to those experienced by the pre-Goldwater-Nichols military. It would follow, then, that the military’s solution might also work for the IAP.

What’s the Solution?

“I am confident that without the power of [Goldwater-Nichols] legislation, we would not have seen the progress made over the last six years.”³⁷

-Colin Powell

Few would argue with General Powell’s quote above, especially in light of the successful military operations post-Goldwater-Nichols compared to the failures of the Iranian

hostage rescue and Beirut and Grenada operations, all of which ultimately led to reform. Without legislation, it is doubtful that the individual services would have ever willingly integrated their capabilities to achieve more effective joint warfighting, and the same holds true for USG agencies and the IAP. Although the root problems within the IAP are similar to those experienced by the pre-Goldwater-Nichols military, one can't deny the fact that there are many more differences between USG agencies than there are between the individual services. The services had the advantage of all being concerned solely with wielding the military element of national power, while USG agencies' interests encompass them all. The services also had much joint structure and organization already in place, which Goldwater-Nichols improved upon. The IAP, by contrast, has virtually none. These differences, however, mean that not only will legislation still be required; it will have to be broader and more far-reaching than what Goldwater-Nichols achieved.

Some have argued that measures short of legislation can fix the IAP—specifically, executive orders. The President can simply direct the necessary changes to his cabinet and will it to be done. While executive orders can be used for change, they cannot undo or overrule the individual statutory requirements that apply to many agencies, which limit their effect. Further, and even more important, executive orders are rarely enduring and subject to change from administration to administration. A case in point is the current administration's modification of the Clinton Administration's Presidential Decision Directive-56 (PDD-56) with NSPD-1.³⁸ Because its longevity will always be in question, an executive order cannot overcome the bureaucratic inertia that sustains the IAP's "business-as-usual" practices, and agencies will simply muddle through and maintain an appearance of compliance until the

next administration takes office. Legislation is the only way to guarantee enduring change that would, in turn, change mindset and cultures.

What should this proposed legislation address? In essence, it should seek to create an interagency structure, organization, and personnel policy similar to that of the joint military, which has proven a relative success. Interagency organizations analogous to the CJCS, the Joint Staff, and combatant commands in function would allow the interagency to effectively develop, oversee, and execute interagency doctrine, policy and operations. With this in mind, legislation should address the following points:

- Creation of a unified interagency authority and accompanying unified interagency doctrine.
- Creation of a unified interagency regional structure with accompanying unified regional interagency directorates.
- Creation of an interagency personnel policy and Interagency Specialty Officer designation.

Unified Interagency Authority and Doctrine

A standing, independent, unified interagency authority should be formed at the highest level of government, permanently staffed by members representing all government agencies and chaired by a single director. This organization and director should supplant the National Security Advisor (NSA) and NSC staff in their current role. As was noted previously, the NSA and NSC staff have become their own agency, losing focus on their role as the ‘honest broker’ among agencies within the administration. Unlike the NSA, the Interagency Director should be subject to Senate confirmation to ensure he can be that honest

broker rather than a political sycophant. The functions of this director should be analogous to those of the CJCS. He should be the principal advisor to the President in regard to the strategic direction of interagency efforts, and present unbiased advice on available courses of action for contingencies—based on the greater good of the nation rather than consensus opinions to protect agencies’ interests. The Interagency Director, along with the Interagency Staff to assist him, should also have additional functions similar to the military functions of the CJCS: preparing and reviewing interagency contingency plans, providing oversight of interagency operations, and developing interagency doctrine.

First and foremost, interagency doctrine should define a common strategic planning process for the interagency. PDD-56, or the as yet unpublished Bush Administration’s NSPD-XX, could serve as a starting point for this endeavor.³⁹ It should also formulate policies for interagency training, and work to identify core competencies in agencies and how they can be employed in the execution of national strategy. Further, it should identify interagency capabilities that are lacking, or absent, and formulate policies for their development.

Some may argue that establishing such organization and doctrine for planning and implementing national policy would hamstring the President, as the procedures and processes may not complement his personal leadership style and preferences. I would counter that the President still maintains his executive authority in this organization to make decisions as he sees fit, and alter strategy as required or desired. The organization merely provides him with better conceived options. Further, the President should be concerned with directing and guiding national strategy and policy, not the mechanics and minutia that go into its development and implementation, provided they are effective.⁴⁰

Unified Regional Structures and Unified Regional Interagency Directorates

A common regional structure should be established within the interagency to better coordinate planning and operations of agencies within each region. Unified regional interagency directorates—analogueous to combatant commanders in the military—should also be created and given responsibility and authority for directing and coordinating interagency activities in each region. The leader of the regional directorate should have similar command authority to that resident in the combatant commands over the agencies assigned to him in order to ensure unity of effort, and avoid the pitfalls of “coordination through cooperation”⁴¹ present in the current process. He should also have some sort of authority over the ambassadors within his region, as well as the combatant commander, in order to ensure that their efforts within a country or region are complementing and not undermining overall regional strategy. Because of the amount of influence the regional interagency director would wield, his chain of command should run directly to the President, and his appointment should be subject to Senate confirmation.

These measures would undoubtedly ignite the “Mother of all Turf Wars” within the government, and many would be concerned about the seemingly inordinate power this office would have. The same concerns were expressed when the combatant commanders were empowered by Goldwater-Nichols, with “service claims that the legislation would make combatant commanders into warlords.”⁴² A well thought out system of checks and balances would have to be developed to alleviate these concerns. In time of war and complex contingencies, however, the unity of command inherent in this structure is much preferable to the “lead agency” approach currently in use. The regional interagency director with

appropriate authority could ensure unity of effort across the entire spectrum of a conflict, coordinating the efforts of agencies across phases to reach the desired end state. The authority of the lead agency, on the other hand, extends only to its own agency, and it cannot compel other agencies to lend the support required for a concerted effort. Without unity of command at the regional level, interagency efforts will continue to be disjointed and falter.

Interagency Personnel System and Interagency Specialty Officers

The current personnel policies within government civil service should be modified to encourage interagency service tours and produce a corps of interagency specialty officers who can lead and staff the above organizations. Analogous to the military's personnel policies for joint duty, there should incentives for personnel to serve in interagency organizations. Likewise, requirements for becoming an Interagency Specialty Officer should be established, and the key positions within interagency organizations should be restricted to those personnel who have achieved specialty officer requirements.

Some might argue that such personnel policies would serve to water-down personnel expertise within individual agencies. Prudent personnel management, however, should negate these concerns by ensuring that personnel tours within interagency organizations are not overly long, and are followed by tours returning individuals to their specialty. Further, what good is this expertise if we are unable to employ it effectively, as is presently the case in the current IAP. A solid corps of trained and educated interagency professionals must be created in order for the IAP to effectively function.

Conclusion

“Sound structure will permit the release of energies and of imagination now unduly constrained by the existing arrangements.”⁴³

-James R. Schlesinger

“Good organization doesn’t guarantee success, but bad organization guarantees failure.”⁴⁴

-Dwight D. Eisenhower

Interagency process is a misnomer, as it is mostly defined by its absence of formal process, structure, and organization. To advance our national strategy in today’s global environment requires synergizing all elements of national power and focusing on a common end state. The current IAP is incapable of this because it lacks a common culture to unify it; a common doctrine to guide it; a national authority to oversee it; a common worldview to focus it; trained and educated personnel to lead it; and directive authority to execute its product. These problems are similar to those found in the pre-Goldwater-Nichols military, but on a much larger scale, and legislation will be required to address interagency problems just as it was in the military. Freeing government agencies from the bureaucratic self-interest in which they have entrenched themselves and achieving true interagency cooperation will probably take the broadest, most dynamic legislation to date. This legislation should seek to create structure and doctrine within the IAP, directive authority, a common regional focus, and interagency friendly personnel policies; all within the intent of creating a common interagency culture. Improving the IAP is of prime importance to the operational commander, as the U.S. military will seldom operate outside of an interagency context, and any burden resulting from the ineptitude of the IAP will be borne on the backs of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines.

NOTES

¹ Tom Clancy, with General Tony Zinni (Ret.) and Tony Koltz, *Battle Ready* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2004), p. 323.

² William W. Mendel and David G. Bradford, *Interagency Cooperation: A Regional Model for Overseas Operations* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1995), p. 1.

³ Mark L. Curry, *The Interagency Process in Regional Foreign Policy*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1994), p.12.

⁴ *Interagency Management of Complex Crisis Operations Handbook* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2003), p. 5.

⁵ Curry, 15.

⁶ James R. Locher III, "Taking Stock of Goldwater-Nichols," *Joint Forces Quarterly* (Autumn 1996), p. 16.

⁷ Clancy, 323.

⁸ Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 3.

⁹ Curry, pp. 14-15.

¹⁰ James R. Locher III, *Victory on the Potomac* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), p. 15.

¹¹ Sunil B. Desai, "Solving the Interagency Puzzle," *Policy Review* 129 February-March 2005 [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.policyreview.org/feb05/desai.html>; Internet; accessed 7 February 2005.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Interagency Transformation, Education, & After Action Review (ITEA) Program Briefing, *Strategic level interagency planning process: A Work in Progress*, [brief on-line]; available from <http://www.ndu.edu/itea/storage/538/itea.ppt>; Internet; accessed January 2005.

¹⁴ Clark A. Murdock et al., *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era*, Phase I Report (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2004), p. 61.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State, *History of the National Security Council, 1947-1997*, [on-line], available from <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/NSChistory.htm>; Internet; accessed January 2005.

¹⁷ Desai.

¹⁸ Ivo H. Dalder and I.M. Destler, *A New NSC for a New Administration*, Policy Brief # 68 -- 2000, The Brookings Institution, [on-line], available from <http://www.brookings.edu/comm/policybriefs/pb68.htm>; Internet; accessed January 2005.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ George W. Bush, National Security Presidential Directive, May 11, 2004, "United States Government Operations in Iraq," [document on-line], available from <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd051104.pdf>; Internet; accessed January 2005.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Michael R. Gordon, "How the Postwar Situation in Iraq Went Awry," *New York Times*, 19 October 2004.

²³ Barry M. Rubin, *Secrets of State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 257.

²⁴ James R. Schlesinger quoted in Locher III, "Taking Stock of Goldwater-Nichols," p. 15.

²⁵ Locher III, "Taking Stock of Goldwater-Nichols," pp. 12-13.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 13.

²⁷ Gabriel Marcella, "National Security and the Interagency Process: Forward into the 21st Century", *Organizing for National Security*, ed. Douglas T. Stuart (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2000), p. 186.

²⁸ Desai.

²⁹ Guillermo Birmingham, Luann Barndt and Thomas Salo, *Achieving Unity of Effort: A Call for Legislation to Improve the Interagency Process and Continue Enhancing Interservice Interoperability So All May Labor As One*, Joint Forces Staff College, Joint and Combined Warfighting School-Intermediate Class 03-03I, 18 September 2003, p. 12.

³⁰ Michael W. Hagee, "Interview: Gen. Mike Hagee, Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps," interview by *Defense News*, 7 February 2005.

³¹ Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Defense Organization: The Need for Change*, Committee Print, 99th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, DC: GPO, 1985), p. 242.

³² Peter W. Chiarelli, "Beyond Goldwater-Nichols", *Joint Forces Quarterly* (Autumn 1993), p. 77.

³³ *Areas of Responsibilities of U.S. Government Departments and Agencies*, [brief on-line]; available from http://www.ndu.edu/itea/storage/528/lidy_interagency_boundaries.pdf; Internet; accessed 10 February 2005.

³⁴ Desai.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ George W. Bush, *Unified Command Plan*, 30 April 2002, p. 1.

³⁷ Chiarelli.

³⁸ George W. Bush, NSPD-1, "Organization of the National Security Council System," 13 February 2001; William J. Clinton, PDD-56, "The Clinton Administrations Policy on Managing Complex Contingency Operations," May 1997. Besides changing the name of many components of the NSC system, NSPD-1 abolished numerous interagency working groups established under PDD-56.

³⁹ Michele Flournoy, *Interagency Strategy and Planning for Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, draft white paper for the CSIS Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2002), pp. 2-3.

⁴⁰ Desai.

⁴¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower quoted as saying "coordination by cooperation is ineffective" in response to the U.S. Navy's proposal to rely on coordination among the Joint Chiefs rather than create a chairman in 1942 in Douglas T. Stuart, ed., *Organizing for National Security* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2000), p. 30.

⁴² Locher III, "Taking Stock of Goldwater-Nichols," p. 13.

⁴³ James R. Schlesinger quoted in Locher III, "Taking Stock of Goldwater-Nichols," p. 15.

⁴⁴ Dwight D. Eisenhower quoted in John Deutsch, Arnold Kanter, and Brent Scowcroft with Christopher Hornbarger, "Strengthening the National Security Interagency Process," *Keeping the Edge: Managing Defense for the Future*, ed. Ashton B. Carter and John B. White (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), p. 269.

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